



Director's Office

One Capitol Hill | Providence, RI 02908 | (401) 222-2280

Jonathan Womer, Director

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Representative Stephen M. Casey
Chairperson, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill No. 5955 – Relating to State Affairs and Government – Department of Housing Land Bank Program

Dear Chairperson Casey,

Thank you for providing Division of Capital Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) within the Department of Administration the opportunity to submit comments in response to House Bill 5955, which proposes new amendments to state affairs and government, specifically relating to proposed land and property governance.

At present, R.I. General Laws § 37-7-5 and 37-7-6 outline the methods of disposal of State property and enable the transfer of State-owned property between State agencies. Further, Section 1.7.3 of the State Properties Committee rules and regulations requires notice to other State agencies when disposing of a State-owned property. State agencies then have 30 days to express interest in a property, which can be transferred at no cost.

Given these existing provisions, the Department of Housing currently has the opportunity to express interest in an eligible property and 30 days to act on this interest. Providing additional time for deliberation obstructs the ability for State agencies to conduct timely transactions and could jeopardize final sale prices. Furthermore, extending the Department of Housing's ability to reallocate State-owned properties from agencies intending to execute a long-term lease may compromise ongoing programming and service delivery, including (but not limited to) leases for State-owned BHDDH group homes.

Finally, the legislation effectively gives the Department of Housing the authority to collect and evaluate 10-year plans for State properties and parcels. Additional clarity would be necessary to define the parameters for evaluating "appropriateness for development into residential housing units" and evidence of plans for future use, as well as the timeline and process for evaluation. These details are necessary to support long-term planning within State agencies.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to share our concerns over this legislation with the Committee. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact my office at your convenience.



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marco Schiappa". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large, sweeping "M" and a cursive "Schiappa".

Marco Schiappa

Acting Director, Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance &
Chairman, State Properties Committee

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
The Honorable June Speakman
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Dawn Huntley, Clerk